

On Resilience: Female Empowerment, Exigent Advocacy, and Climate Justice in Action

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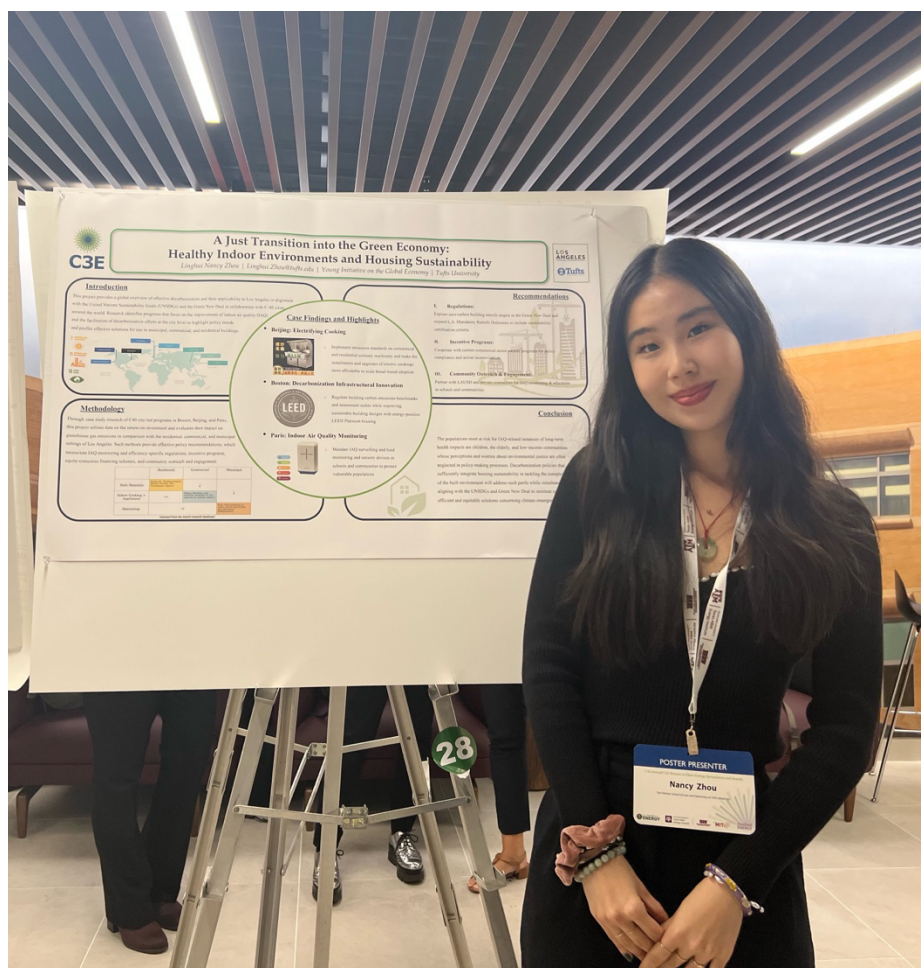


From left, Paula Glover (President, Alliance to Save Energy), Barbara Kates-Garnick (Professor of Practice and Senior Research Fellow, Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at the Fletcher School, Tufts University), David Terry (Executive Director, National Association of State Energy Officials), Sally Benson (Deputy Director for Energy, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President), and moderator Anne Choate (Executive Vice President, Energy, Environment, and Infrastructure, ICF) held edifying and comprehensive panel titled “Charting a Course: Effective Energy Policies” at the Bush School of Government of Texas A&M University in Washington, D.C. on November 2, 2022.

Throughout recent years, severe weather destabilization, pollution, and a global pandemic have exacerbated the volatilities of energy supply, access, and prices, culminating in the increasing global need for clean, reliable, and affordable energy and prompting the development of effective strategies and innovative technologies. Such circumstances have brought attention to the uncertainties of global warming that future generations will have to reckon with. Specifically, the higher the greenhouse gas concentration, the greater the scope of irreversibility and severity of the potential harms associated with the risks of proliferating and unprecedented levels of CO₂. Nevertheless, realizing a decarbonized energy system is not solely ecological but also connected to the processes of global governance such as capacity building and public-private partnerships. The exigency of climate change depends on how the world responds to these challenges resulting from unsustainable economic decisions. Bringing my passion for distributive justice and environmental diplomacy, I presented my research at the 11th Clean Energy Education & Empowerment (#C3E) Initiative Advancing Women’s Leadership in Clean Energy Conference

and shared insight into the C40 cities' municipal, commercial, and residential paradigms of decarbonization efforts.

C3E aims to close the gender gap by promoting female leadership and success in clean energy sectors and proffering valuable networking resources, mentorship, and emotional rapport. As this year's distinctive graduate scholar of international policy, I had the honor of joining Professor Barbara Kates-Garnick in representing Fletcher at the symposium on November 2, 2022. The annual convention entails informative workshops, panels, and poster sessions, which have allowed me to connect with prominent female-identifying scholars and professionals to learn more about their experiences in the global energy fields.



Nancy Zhou presented her research during poster sessions at the 11th Clean Energy Education & Empowerment (#C3E) Initiative Advancing Women's Leadership in Clean Energy Conference in Washington, D.C. on November 2, 2022.

My undergraduate studies on environmental justice and ethics in addition to prior internships with the Los Angeles Mayor's Office of International Affairs and China's venture capital industry in green economy have shown me the potential of policy research for carbon emission mitigation and the just transitioning into sustainability in contemporary society. At C3E 2022, I had the privilege of engaging in productive discussions with other inspiring women across a multitude of disciplines involving nuclear science, chemistry, civil engineering, etc.,

whose rapport and helpful feedback have furthered my interest in investigating the extent of standard setting for the permissibility of CO₂ atmospheric concentration limit on an intercontinental scale in view of multilateral regulations and incentivization principles. Through in-depth case studies of various C40 members, including Boston, Beijing, San Francisco, Vancouver, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Seoul based on their municipalities with relevant indoor air quality (IAQ) programs that have conducted the design, implementation, and evaluation phases, my project suggests that the most vulnerable populations for IAQ-related instances of long-term health impacts are children, the elderly, and the low-income populace whose perceptions and worries about environmental justice are often neglected in policy-making proceedings. The dismantlement of structural inequality must entail the conscious prioritization of socially disadvantaged and historically disinvested groups who suffer from the inaccessibility of clean energy and exorbitant pricing of renewable, informing my decarbonization protocols and proposition of responsive ordinances on account of the Justice40 Accelerator. My fruitful conversations with C3E fellows on such meaningful, restorative, and reparative schemes of commitment shed light on the power of representation, knowledge, and resilience to raise awareness of interdisciplinary perspectives and create tangible change at intertwined local and transnational levels.

I'm grateful to #C3E, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Texas A&M Energy Institute, MIT Energy Initiative, and Stanford Energy for the opportunity to engage with such an ingenious, inclusive, and compassionate community of female pioneers whom I revere. I aspire to embrace and continue building upon their legacies of impact-generating research to tackle complicated environmental problems arising in practice and jointly face the concurrent climate crisis, cultivating humility and effectuating cross-boundary collaboration.

As founder and CEO of Pink Petro Energy Katie Mehnert has emphasized during her "Why Waste a Good Crisis" workshop, although most storms come to disrupt routines, some are there to clear the path. We only have one Earth that we must not ruin—it is time to take action, starting with leveraging the momentum of advocacy to uphold mutual responsibility among all individuals for equitable planetary resource allocation in hopes of restoring the well-being of our environment and humanity.